

SENATE RESOLUTION 6

By Akbari

A RESOLUTION to honor and congratulate Dr. Erma Lavern Clanton on the celebration of her ninety-eighth birthday.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that we pay tribute to those citizens who are celebrating special occasions in their estimable lives; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Erma Lavern Clanton will celebrate her ninety-eighth birthday on February 5, 2021, a milestone that will be commemorated as yet another precious souvenir of life's rich pageant; and

WHEREAS, the fourth of eight children, Dr. Erma Clanton was born in Memphis and graduated from Booker T. Washington High School; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Clanton received her Bachelor of Science degree in 1945 from Alabama State University in Montgomery; she later received a master's degree in theater and communications from the University of Memphis in 1969 and a Doctor of Humane Letters from the Tennessee School of Religion in 2001; and

WHEREAS, after earning her bachelor's degree, Dr. Erma Clanton taught English and speech at Melrose High School in Memphis for twenty-four years, and she was actively involved in several theatrical productions performed by her students; and

WHEREAS, a historic pioneer, Dr. Clanton became the first Black instructor in the Theater and Communication Department of the University of Memphis when she accepted a position as an associate professor in 1970; she taught for twenty-one years until her retirement; and

WHEREAS, during her tenure, she began creating and directing her own work, including *Roots, Rhymes & Righteous Times (An Evening of Soul)*, *Listen Children, God's Trombones*, *Black Pearls of the World*, and *Gifted & Black – On the Right Track*; and

WHEREAS, also a writer of original music, Dr. Clanton directed her new shows in Memphis and beyond; she worked with gifted at-risk students at Hamilton High School in 1997 and 1998, and she taught one semester at LeMoyne-Owen College in 1999; and

WHEREAS, a longtime member of the NAACP, Dr. Erma Clanton has served as chair of the Evening of Soul Foundation and as a board member of the Stax Museum of American Soul Music; and

WHEREAS, no stranger to honors and awards, Ms. Clanton is a recipient of the Dr. Martin Luther King Distinguished Service Award from the University of Memphis and the Bronze Jubilee Award from the Public Broadcasting Service; and

WHEREAS, as Dr. Erma Clanton approaches her eleventh decade, she is still an active and productive member of society, participating in various civic and community events, as her health permits; and

WHEREAS, we wish to grasp this golden opportunity to specially recognize one of Tennessee's most outstanding citizens on this very special occasion; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED TWELFTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, that we honor and congratulate Dr. Erma Lavern Clanton on the celebration of her ninety-eighth birthday and extend to her our best wishes for much continued success and happiness.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.